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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-ninth session
Agenda items 12 and 24

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Note verbale dated 17 February 1993 from the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human Rights

1. The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to enclose herewith a note concerning the sufferings experienced by Iraqi citizens, particularly the sick, children, women and the elderly as a result of banning the civil regular flights of Iraqi Airways planes that transport passengers, medicine and goods from and to Iraq.

2. The Mission will be grateful if the Centre kindly regards this note as an official document of the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda items 12 and 24.

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We would like to draw the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to an issue that is explicitly and directly related to the human rights in Iraq, the continuation of which will have detrimental results on all segments of the Iraqi population and the several aspects related to their right to acquire medicine and food and their other rights including right of transportation.

Since the aggression perpetrated against Iraq on 17 January 1991, Iraqi Airways planes have not been allowed to operate their regular flights to transport passengers and cargo from and to Iraq. Irrespective of the purpose of wanting to use the said flights, Iraq has made exhaustive efforts with the Sanctions Committee of the Security Council to allow Iraqi planes resume their flights. Yet, these efforts failed due to the intransigence of some influential Member States in the Security Council.

While we indicate that we are not in the process of presenting the political aspects of this issue in connection with the oppressive stance practised against Iraq in the course of interpreting and implementing the resolutions of the Security Council, we wish to present before the Commission on Human Rights some of the facts relating to the humanitarian aspects of this issue, and their direct effect on the enjoyment by the Iraqis of the simplest rights guaranteed by International conventions on Human Rights.

Travel from and to Iraq as well as the transport of food and medical material are all done through one international route, namely, the 1,000-km-long overland route to Amman, which takes an average of 17 hours to cover.

It is hardly necessary to mention that among the travellers are sick people, children and elderly, who have no other alternative than to embark on this long route which lacks the services needed by the travellers, as well as the negative effects resulting from delivering certain medicines which require immediate delivery and special storage methods which are not available in land transport, not to mention the delay of delivery of foodstuffs to Iraq and the direct consequences on the daily life of the citizens.

This serious situation has led to high mortality among the sick, the elderly and infants who are unable to withstand the hardships of long road travel, especially due to the fact that most of them travel to Jordan to seek treatment. You are also no doubt aware that large-scale use of this land route has increased road accidents and fatalities. None of this would have occurred had Iraqi planes been allowed to resume their flights, if only for humanitarian reasons.

There exists another humanitarian issue which we also wish to present before the Commission. It involves some 4,000 Iraqi Airways employees, who provide sustenance for nearly 20,000 persons but who have been jobless for the last two years because of the discontinuation of the Iraqi Airways flights, due to the embargo imposed upon its airplanes.

The aforementioned circumstances constitute a flagrant violation of civil, political, economic and social rights enshrined in the two International Covenants and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We do not believe that the Commission can overlook such an inhumanitarian situation. We therefore hope that this matter will be reflected in a humanitarian act to be decided by the Commission leading to the alleviation of such suffering, under its mandate relating to the protection of human rights and guaranteeing the implementation of related international covenants.

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